Telephone Network in North-East Region

2634. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether is Government have formulated any new telecom policy in the country ;

(b) if so, the salient features of the new telecom policy ; and

(c) the steps being taken so for with regard to provide telephone network in the rural areas of the country particularly in the NER ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) The New Telecom Policy, 1999 was formulated by the Government in March, 1999.

(b) The salient features of New Telecom Policy, 1999 are :

— Creation of modern telecom infrastructure taking into account the convergence of IT, media, telecom and consumer electronics.

— Convert telecom sector into competitive environment.

— Provision of universal service to all uncovered areas including the rural areas.

— Provision of high level service capable of meeting the needs of country's economy.

— Encourage development of telecommunications facilities in remote, hilly and tribal areas of the country.

— Achieve a tele-density of 7 by 2005 and 15 by 2010.

— Increase rural tele-density from the current level of 0.4 to 4 by 2010.

— Cover all villages by 2002.

— Internet access to be provided to all district Headquarters by 2000.

— Reliable media to all exchanges by 2002.

(c) 18,780 out of 37,097 no. of villages of North-East Regions, Assam and Sikkim have been provided with telephone facility and as a whole 374605 out of 607491 no. of villages have been covered all over the country.

The remaining villages are also being progressively covered as per NTP, 1999 guidelines.

21,557 telephone exchanges as on 1-4-2000 and 44.2 lakh telephones as on 1-3-2000 are also working in the rural areas in the country. New Telephone exchanges are being opened and capacity of existing exchanges is being extended as per the requirement to provide telephone connections.

Computerised Telephone Exchange in Assam

2635. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of computerised Trunk Telephone Exchanges proposed to be set up in the State of Assam during the year 2000-2001, district-wise ;

(b) the details of the above telephone exchanges which have been set up in the State during the last three years ; and

(c) the details of telephone exchanges extended in Assam during this period ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) No Computerized Trunk Exchange is proposed to be set up in the State of Assam during the year 2000-2001.

(b) One Computerized Trunk Exchange was set up at Guwahati during the last three years.

(c) No Computerized Trunk Exchange was extended during the last three years. The details of telephone exchanges opened and extended during the last three years is given in the annexure. [*See* Appendix 189, Annexure No. 67]

Cellular Service of MTNL, in Delhi and Mumbai

2636. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL proposes to start its CWN cellular service in Delhi and Mumbai :

(b) if so, by when it is likely to take off ; and

(c) what are the main features of the service ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. MTNL proposes to start its own GSM based cellular Mobile service in Delhi & Mumbai.

(b) It is likely to take off in the 3rd Quarter of this Year.